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THE TERRACOTTA HEADS OF TEOTIHUACAN.

[PLATES III, IV.]

I.

Forty-two years have passed since Brantz Mayer, referring to the clay heads that form the subject of this paper, spoke of their purposes being then entirely unknown to Mexican antiquarians:¹ seventeen years later, E. B. Tylor pronounced them to be "rather a puzzle:"² and, at the present day, the "riddle of the many heads," as it has been aptly termed by an eminent archæologist of our day,³ is practically unsolved. In the *Museo Nacional* of the City of Mexico the numerous specimens are labelled, inquiringly, "idols or ex-votos?" There has been no lack of interest, however, in these small works of art; and since Nebel, in his beautifully illustrated *Viaje pintoresco y arqueologico*, represented twelve of them, commenting upon the excellence of their workmanship, many writers have mentioned them and freely indulged in speculation and conjecture as to their origin and use. The diversity of head-gear observed in them has given rise to, and even been quoted in proof of, theories of the migrations of tribes, of the mixtures of widely differing races, or of their succession to each other,⁴ in the occupation of the Valley of

¹ "They have evidently never been attached to bodies (of clay, is here meant) and their purposes are entirely unknown to Mexican antiquarians, although they have hitherto been discovered in great quantities at the foot of these teocallis." (B. MAYER, *Mexico; Aztec, Spanish and Republican*. New York, 1844, p. 227).

² "... mere heads which never had bodies (of clay) and will not stand anyhow. They could not have been personal ornaments, for there is nothing to fasten them by. They are rather a puzzle." (E. B. TYLOR, *Anahuac*. London, 1861, p. 229).

³ Professor F. W. Putnam, Curator of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Mass., to whom the writer is much indebted for the interest taken in the present investigation and for kind encouragement.

⁴ "One finds, among these masks that reproduce types of various Indian races with felicity and sometimes with art, strange faces that seem not to belong to America. Among the specimens reproduced in our engraving, one may observe a negro with

Mexico. Owing to the unfamiliar aspect of some of these head-dresses, it has been asserted that they could not be even "Toltec," but must be relics of still more remote, and unknown, races of men.⁵ Diverse uses have been assigned to them, but perhaps the commonest supposition has been that they were in some way connected with ceremonies relating to the dead.⁶

thick lips, flat nose, and woolly hair. One sees, also, a Chinese head, and I possess representative types of the white race, and Japanese masks. One may observe heads with retreating foreheads like the profiles of Palenque, and others with the straight brow of a Grecian profile. They are orthognathous or prognathous, the faces are smooth or bearded; it is an extraordinary mixture that proves how many races must have mingled or succeeded each other on this old continent." (DÉSIRÉ CHAR-NAY, *Les anciennes villes du Nouveau Monde*. Paris, 1884, p. 118).

⁵ "With a little reflection, it becomes evident that the forms examined belong to known types, whereas others are totally foreign and depart entirely from those recorded in historical times. It matters little, as we have said, that they should resemble Jews, Asiatics, or Egyptians; they are not such, in truth, but it remains amply demonstrated that, beyond the period of the chronicles related by hieroglyphic writings, there existed people of unknown attire, races differing from those of modern times, and civilizations revealed to us by works that are not like those of the Toltecs, Acolhuas, or Aztecs." (OROZCO Y BERRA, *Historia Antigua de Mexico*. Mexico, vol. II. p. 360).—Sr. Alfredo Chavero, the prominent Mexican writer, on page 242 of the magnificently illustrated work in course of publication in the city of Mexico, *Mexico à travers de los Siglos*, after attributing the construction of the pyramids in the Valley of Mexico to the "Vixtoti," a southern civilization, proceeds: "Now we can explain to ourselves the types and head-dresses of the heads from Teotihuacan that surprised Orozco y Berra so much, those faces that were thought to be of negroes, those turbans similar to those of Copán, and the head-dress with bands like those of Nachán."—Mr. Bancroft's comment (*Native Races*, vol. I. p. 541) will be found to differ from the testimony of other writers: "Many of these heads have been brought away and sketched, and they are very similar one to another."

I have been informed that similar heads are found in other localities, but have, as yet, had no opportunity of obtaining reliable specimens of these for study and comparison. It may not be out of place here to state that I have been unable to detect, in the many heads examined, any type but an Indian one; indeed, some of them bear a striking resemblance to individuals of the Aztec race who, for several months last winter, acted for us as domestic servants or guides.

⁶ "One's attention is drawn to the fact that in the cinerary urns only the skull appears; it is accompanied by precious objects to show that it was that of a prominent person. This fact might explain the reason why in those ruins (of Teotihuacan) are found in profusion certain little clay heads, terminating in an appendage, and intended to be inserted into some object; perhaps the body of the dead was consigned to the flames, whilst the head alone, being the principal part of man, was preserved, and the little heads were placed in the grave to commemorate the race of each individual." (OROZCO Y BERRA, vol. II. p. 359).—"I have seen a suggestion somewhere, that, when a man was buried, each surviving member of his family put one of

It cannot be said, however, that any of the above theories were proved or even strongly advocated; the small clay heads, after a few remarks, were generally dismissed in favor of greater subjects, Orozco y Berra being the only author to treat of them at length. When, therefore, the present writer adopted the course of comparative research, deeming it the sole one that might yield definite results, it led to a field unoccupied by other workers.⁷

The clay heads are still found in countless numbers at Teotihuacan, and each year a rich harvest of them is reaped by those who search the freshly ploughed stretches of level land that lie across the broad straight *Micoatl*, or Path of the Dead, and about the bases of the Pyramids. Varying in length of face from one to two inches, with exceptional specimens under and above this average, they have invariably been found with only a neck or appendage attached to them, and may be readily distinguished, by this one noteworthy peculiarity, from those that were applied as ornaments⁸ on terracotta vessels, and from fragments of "idols," etc. Sometimes, this neck is formed of the same mass of clay from which the head was moulded, and is short, round, and smoothly finished at the end: but, in the majority of specimens, a close examination shows that the faces were made,

these heads into his grave. This sounds plausible enough, especially as both male and female heads are found." (E. B. TYLOR, p. 229).—"Don Lucas Alaman believed that the numerous terracotta heads were relics distributed by the priests to the crowds of pilgrims that assembled at the shrines." (H. H. BANCROFT, *ibid.*).

⁷The writer begs to acknowledge the courtesy of Sr. Don Jesus Sanchez, the Director of the *Museo Nacional*, through whom every facility for examining and sketching the fine collection contained there was afforded, and that of Dr. Chas. Rau, the curator of the Smithsonian Museum, and of Dr. Ruschenberger, of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, where the Poinsett collection is deposited. The specimens at the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, and those at New Haven were only hastily inspected on account of pressure of time. Besides the many specimens thus compared, the writer possesses a fair collection, made in person, which has furnished many of the illustrations.

⁸In the collections examined, such fragmentary heads are often placed with those that form the subject of this paper. The characteristic finish of the back and neck of these shows that they belong to a separate class. Among the "fragmentary heads" are those broken off the flat "idols" of well-known shape: the flat, occasionally grotesque, masks (parts of figures also) that are found applied in bas-relief to ancient vases, a few of which exist in the *Museo Nacional*, forming a striking contrast to the gross imitations close by, laden with meaningless decoration. These complete figures, or parts of them, as well as the numerous heads of tigers, eagles, owls, lizards, etc. (evidently ornamental appendages to clay vessels) seem, in many cases, to have been pressed by moulds, of which a few genuine specimens exist in various collections.

like the Aztec stone-masks, with a flat back, and then baked. Subsequently, the neck, about an inch long, was roughly pressed to the smooth back, at an angle from the face, leaving the chin free. A second more or less thorough baking then took place, and the fact that the fresh clay failed to adhere firmly or to acquire the hardness of the masks themselves, explains why, in so many cases, the necks are brittle and have become readily detached and broken (PL. III, 1-4). The unfinished, carelessly-pressed necks and backs of these masks,—offering a striking contrast to the usually delicate and artistic finish of the faces,—lead one to infer that the backs and necks were meant to be concealed, and that the latter were intended to serve solely for attachment or insertion.⁹

At the first glance, the multitude and variety of these heads are confusing; but after prolonged observation they seem to naturally distribute themselves into three large and well-defined Classes, specimens of each of which exist in nearly every collection. It would appear that each Class represents a period in the history of their manufacture, a stage in their evolution.

CLASS I.

In the first Class (PL. III) we find the primary and crude attempts at the representation of a human face, shaped like a mask attached to a short neck or stump.¹⁰ Some of these have markedly projecting mouths and chins, and the neck is placed at an almost acute angle with the line of the face. In others of the same shape, the features are better rendered, and, in the finest specimens of this first Class, we sometimes find faces, with vestiges of a dull-red paint upon them, which are so characteristic that it would seem as though a not unsuccessful attempt at portraiture had been made, though all are of the same conventionalized shape, size and type. All are earless, have high square foreheads, prominent and well-shaped noses, open nostrils, large mouths, and eyes that either seem half-closed, or are, in a smaller number of cases, entirely so. The features are invariably

⁹ In the *Museo Nacional* there are three unique specimens in which the long neck spreads into the roughly and badly shaped semblance of shoulders. One cannot fail to perceive, however, that in these cases the enlargement of the appendage was merely to facilitate attachment. The angle at which the face is placed, the great length of the neck, and the total absence of finish exclude the possibility of inferring an attempt at the representation of shoulders.

¹⁰ In the *Museo Nacional* there are not less than 61 specimens of this Class.

represented in repose,¹¹ a characteristic that extends to the following Classes as well.

CLASS II.

The second Class (PL. III), although the least numerous of the three, is one of great interest. In it are found the first departures from the conventional form above mentioned, and also attempts at the modelling of clay ornaments for the head are visible in the circular earrings (some with beaded edges) that stand out on either side of the face. Unmistakeable traces of impressions made upon the clay while still in its plastic condition, remain to prove that these new forms were made in order to adapt the little heads to the shapes of head-dresses and ornaments that, for some reason, were to be affixed to them. These clay heads seem, in fact, to have served somewhat the purpose of a hairdresser's poll. In some of them, holes, notches and lines were made, which could serve for the attachment or insertion of decorations. Traces of paint, brown, red and white, are noticeable in many, becoming peculiarly vivid when a specimen is immersed in water. This immersion also reveals very great differences in the color and quality of the clay. From this fact, one must infer, either that all the heads were not made in the same locality, or that the clay itself was brought from several sources. The new forms are five in number (categories A, B, C, D, E), and a representative specimen of each is given in plate III.

II. A.—These heads are exceptional in being round and well-proportioned, with necks formed from the same mass of clay. The first discovery of traces of the previous existence of decorations of a perishable nature was made by the writer whilst examining a tiny head, belonging to this category, picked up at Teotihuacan. It is smaller and of a finer clay and workmanship than any specimen met with before or since. A representation of it is given (II-A-1), but it scarcely conveys an adequate impression of the original. The head is round and disproportionately high, in order to serve as a foundation for the close-fitting cap or head-dress that was pressed on it so tightly that

¹¹ In this respect a striking contrast is offered by the animated, mirthful expressions of the terracotta figurines found in the State of Vera-Cruz and admirably represented in Hermann Strebel's recent work: *Alt-Mexiko*, Hamburg, 1885. His specimens, in some respects not as elaborate in detail as the heads from Teotihuacan, show, however, a certain degree of care taken to represent open eyes. The eyeball is formed, and the iris is indicated by a circular depression.

some of the clay, yet soft, was forced down in the attempt, and remains as a thick line at the nape of the neck, below the once-existing edge. An examination under a strong magnifying glass proves that this cap was not of a textile fabric, impressions of which would be easily recognized, but of a perfectly smooth and yet yielding substance that left impressions on certain parts.¹² High on the forehead are two small, irregular, circular hollows, symmetrically placed on either side. On the top of the head, extending backwards and diverging, are several regular rows of impressions of the size of a pin-head. A straight line on the lower forehead, formed by the cessation of the burnished finish of the face, and a slight roughness show the position held by the cap. The magnifying glass also reveals the fact that the features of this specimen had undoubtedly been cut with some sharply-pointed instrument.



FIG. 18.—Terracotta head from Mexico à travers des Siglos, p. 243.

II. B.—The workmanship of heads of this type is generally fine and delicate. The impressions left are usually observable about the forehead and chin. Circular ear-ornaments are represented upon them, and it would seem as though all of them represented women.

II. C.—“There comes next in order a type distinguishable by two protuberances of the forehead and the absence of hair, as though the individuals were in

¹² In connection with this specimen the following passages are suggestive: Fray Toribio de Motolinia (*Coleccion de documentos para la historia de Mexico*, publicada par Joaquin Garcia Icazbalceta. Tomo I, Mexico, 1858) tratado I, chap. v, p. 33; “They (the Mexicans) had idols [to the Spanish new-comers every image seemed ‘an idol’] of stone, of wood and of baked clay . . . great, middle-sized, small and tiny ones. Some had the semblance of bishops, with their mitres and croziers, of which some were gilt and others decorated with turquoises in many ways.” The same writer (tratado II, chap. IX, p. 137) describes the method used by the Indians of his day, in making precious inlaid crucifixes for the altars. A cross was shaped in wood and covered with a thick pitch or glue. With great care and nicety this was heated, and turquoises and stones of various colours set into the softened surface until this was completely covered with them.—Fr. Bernardino de Sahagun (*Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. Mexico, 1829, vol. II, chap. IV, p. 353) speaks of “thin and flexible plates of gold that were bound to the forehead” and worn by the lords.—In Lord Kingsborough’s work the text of the Codex Mendoza describes the representations on plate XLI as “10 plates of gold, four fingers in width, of the thickness of parchment.”

the habit of shaving." (Orozco y Berra, vol. II, p. 359). This category is very numerous, and exhibits distinctly feminine features as well as more frequent traces of artificial attachments. Often a sunken line extends across the brow, as in II-C-1, and a deep, transverse notch is observable in the depression of the middle of the head. In some specimens a cavity, exhibiting the contour of a small obsidian flake, was made at the back of the mask, under the transverse notch.

II. D.—A protuberance above the eyes is the distinctive feature of this category. The specimen illustrated, a back view of which is given (PL. III), bears traces of having been painted with light-brown color. It exhibits also a unique feature: the little neck, shaped like a flattened pipe-stem, was evidently baked and hardened before it was forced into the soft clay at the back of the mask, and no care was taken to smooth the displaced mass of clay.

II. E.—These heads are conical, and all bear evidence that they once had an attached ornamentation on one side of the head. The smaller head (II-E-1) is remarkable for the band of red paint (evidently applied under the glaze) that divides the elongated forehead into two equal parts: it will be the subject of comment further on.

CLASS III.

We now come to the last and most important Class, the one that has excited the most interest, remark, and theorizing, and which in many instances exhibits a quality of workmanship surprising by its excellence, and a confusing variety of peculiar and not ungraceful head-dresses. Under seemingly endless differences of detail, the five fundamental forms of the second Class remain unchanged. A skill in modelling had been attained which made it possible and preferable to represent, in clay, parts and sometimes the whole of the elaborate head-gears formed of different substances, that had been previously affixed to the small clay heads. The transition was a gradual one. Some specimens (III-I-1; III-J-1) with imitation of fringed hair in clay have, also, either small holes, into which probably feathers were stuck, or bare places left for supplementary decoration. It is fortunate for the investigator that finally even feathers were imitated in clay, for it is with the complete representations of Class III in hand, that one can mentally reconstruct the vanished finery of the identical shapes of Class II. The various impressions existing in the latter correspond exactly in location with the solid clay imitations

of feathers, tufts, locks of hair, etc., of the more skilful artistic productions.

It is not difficult to classify this large group according to the modified reproductions of the essentially identical head-dresses that many specimens have in common. Placing some of these, which seemed from a superficial glance to be alike, side by side and comparing them carefully, they have been found by the writer to invariably present differences either in size, quality of clay, or execution. Moreover, each one invariably exhibits modifications of feature sufficient to give every specimen an individuality of its own. It seems reasonable therefore to suppose that these clay heads are portraits of persons. The faces are invariably in repose, in some the eyes are closed: in the picture-writings, closed eyes invariably convey the idea of death. We find, with identical head-dresses, faces young and smooth, others very elongated, some with sunken cheeks, others with wrinkles: were a deity represented, this variety would scarcely occur, but a conventional semblance would have been adopted and maintained without change.

Extending, now, the comparative study of the heads to the head-dresses¹³,—making use, for comparison, of Fray Bernardino de Sahagun's numerous and detailed descriptions of those worn by the Aztec women, warriors, nobles, and living images of the divinities, and of the delineations of such in the codexes reproduced in Lord Kingsborough's great work,—it will be found that the principal types of the clay head-gears (including those mentioned by Orozco y Berra¹⁴ as quite strange and unknown) agree, in many cases, even to the smallest details, with those described and depicted in the above authentic sources. A single instance of such complete similarity might, of course, be attributable to coincidence: a series of instances, however, arrest and claim attention.

Before examining the literally and most carefully translated passages from Sahagun's invaluable work, in connection with the terracotta types from Teotihuacan, to which are added corresponding

¹³This is in accordance with the writer's premise: that, unless the contrary be proved, the explanations of relics of ancient pottery found on or near the surface of the soil in the Valley of Mexico should be sought for, at first, in the records of the last civilization known to have existed there and to have practised the art of moulding in clay.

¹⁴His descriptions of each type will be appended to the writer's: they will prove that identical groups are under consideration.

delineations from the picture-writings, it will be well for those unacquainted with the strange religious observances of the Ancient Mexicans, to understand what is meant by the above-mentioned "living images of the gods,"¹⁵ and for others to have their attention drawn to the fact (which will be treated at length in Part II of this paper) that the symbolic head-dress and distinctive garb of a deity were worn, not only by the victims sacrificed in its honor, but by priests in certain ceremonies, by children consecrated to a deity, by "noblemen;" and also formed an important feature in the funeral rites.

III. A.¹⁶—"The slave destined to die on the feast of the god Tezcatlipoca . . . they cut his hair in the fashion used by the captains, tying it in a tuft on the crown of his head, with a curious fringe; they fastened to this two tassels with their rings (or circles)¹⁷ very curiously made of feathers, gold, and rabbit's hair. These they called *axtazelli*."¹⁸ (Sahagun, book II, chap. XXIV).¹⁹ By adopting, as the meaning of the word *boton* in this particular case, that of "a design in the shape of a ring or screw used for ornamentation in balustrades, keys and other articles of iron, tin or other materials," we have, in the head-dress he describes as worn by Tezcatlipoca's living representative, the one permanent and unmistakable feature of the god's head-gear, the hollow circle, from the centre of which issues a shape which, though it varies in each representation, yet conveys the same symbolic meaning. It is fortunate to be able to

¹⁵ "They appoynted any slave to be the representation of the idoll, saying it was his picture. They, every yeare, gave one slave to the Priests that they might never want the lively image of their idoll. At his first entry into the office, after he had been well washed, they attyred him with all the ornaments of the idoll giving him the same name." At the feast of the god he was sacrificed in its honor. *The Natural and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies by Acosta, translated by E. G.* London, 1604, lib. v.

¹⁶ Of this type there are two specimens in the *Museo Nacional* and three in the writer's collection.

¹⁷ As the Spanish word *boton* has several and diverse meanings (see *Diccionario de la Academia Española*, 1865) the writer, before translating it as *ring*, or *circle*, resorted to the picture-writings and compared Sahagun's description with the symbolic head-ornament that recurs, with but slight modification, in all representations of the god Tezcatlipoca.

¹⁸ From *axtal*=heron-crest and *xelli*=divided, from the verb *xeliui*=to divide (Rémi Siméon).

¹⁹ The writer has translated from the text of Sahagun's *Historia General* in the seventh volume of Lord Kingsborough's *Antiquities of Mexico*, in preference to that published by Carlos Maria de Bustamante, Mexico, 1829.

determine what this was by referring to Duran and to the illustrations of his *Atlas*²⁰ (*fig. 19, a*): "The idol of the god Tezcatlipoca, as adored in the city of Mexico (that of Cholula was differently apparelled) wore . . . about its head a circlet of burnished gold finished with an ear of gold with smokes painted in it that signify the hearing of the supplications and prayers of afflicted sinners. From between this ear and the circlet issued a large bunch of the crests and feathers of the white heron."²¹ The signification of the smokes, as given above, is quite erroneous: in the first case, according to an invariable and well-known rule in the picture-writings, they are represented in Duran's illustration as issuing *from* the disk attached to the circlet. Nor can the disk be "an ear," for this is quite distinctly represented, in

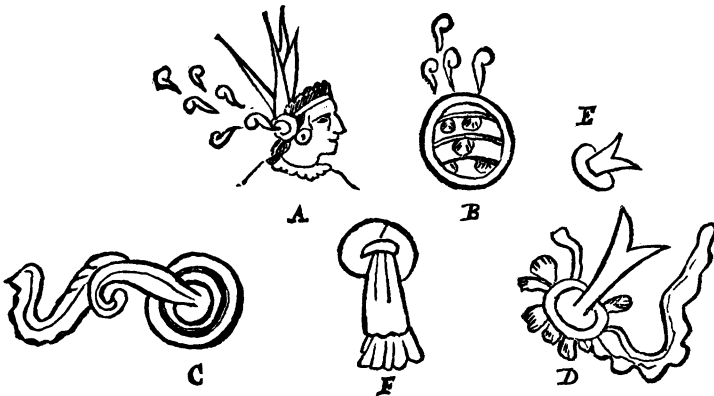


FIG. 19.—A and F, from *Atlas Duran*; B, from *Mapa de Tepechpan*; C, from bas-relief of "Sacrificial stone"; D, from *Vatican Codex*; E, from *Borgian Codex*.

its natural position, by the conventional circular ear-ornament. Unquestionably, the circle with smokes issuing from it forms the "rebus" of the god's name composed of *tezcatl* = mirror, and *poca* = to smoke. In support of this assertion the writer refers to the hieroglyph of the name of Chimalpopoca, "emperor" of Mexico, as represented in the *mapa de Tepechpan* and reproduced in Orozco y Berra's atlas. The puffs of smoke issuing from the shield = *chimalli* are drawn in an identical manner (*fig. 19, b*). After glancing at the

²⁰ Fray Diego Duran, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España*. Mexico 1867-80, vol. II, p. 98.

²¹ Here we see that the feathers worn by the living representative of Tezcatlipoca were probably heron's feathers; at all events the name indicates this (see note 18).

various forms²² given to the "smoke" in the several codexes (*fig. 19, d, e*), it is not difficult to see how, in the case of such a form of head-dress being worn by a living, moving being, this smoke would assume the form of a pendent tassel, as in *fig. 19, f*. We find figured in some of the clay heads from Teotihuacan a faithful and natural representation of such insignia as were actually worn.

III. B.²³—In the feast of the eleventh month, Ochpaniztli,²⁴ ". . the image of Centeotl was a youth who wore as a mask the skin flayed from the thigh of the woman who had been sacrificed. . . His garb was . . . the mask of skin over the head, and a hood of featherwork fastened to a feather garment with sleeves and body. The point of the long hood was twisted back, and on it was a crest like a cock's comb." Further on, in the same chapter, the skin is spoken of "that was worn on the head and over the face like a mask."

(Sahagun, book II, chap. xxx). The above description of hood and garment is applicable to a figure, drawn in Duran's Atlas, relating to the feast Tlacaxipehualixtli, on which occasion several human beings were sacrificed and their skins worn. In Duran's text (vol. II, p. 148) the hood is described as being "scarlet and encircled with a scarlet ribbon that, tied above the forehead, formed a gallant bow." Its serrated ends, as shown in the drawing, and its color, probably suggested Sahagun's comparison to a "crest like a cock's comb." From the accord of Sahagun's description with Duran's text and illustrations (*fig. 20*), we may infer that an identical costume was worn on both religious festivals. In examining the terracotta specimens of this group, one observes that the face is represented as covered by a smooth mask with apertures for the eyes and mouth only.²⁵ It is the only terracotta type that has a



FIG. 20.—From
Atlas Duran.

²² The writer observes that the "emperor Tizoc and warriors" sculptured in bas-relief around the so-called "sacrificial-stone" wear this symbolic form of head-dress (see *fig. 19, c*).

²³ Of this type there are three in the *Museo Nacional*, two in the writer's, and three in the Poinsett collection.

²⁴ After the female victim called Toçi had been killed in honor of the goddess of the same name (= Centeotl), her body was flayed, and a priest, assuming her appellation, clothed himself in her skin, entire, excepting the piece mentioned above which was brought to the youth Centeotl who, during the festivity, was called "the son of Toçi."

²⁵ "Not a few are distinguishable by a species of turban that encircles the head

roll or band of any description encircling the face. It would seem as though this and the deep sunken lines in the turban (corresponding in position to that of "the ribbon that encircled the hood," etc.) were made in order to afford facilities for the adjustment of a small hood corresponding in material, and possibly in shape, to that mentioned above.²⁶

III. C.—The god of rain, Tlaloc, and the lesser divinities of the same name are invariably represented in Aztec art with circles about their eyes and a curved band above the mouth, and in the picture-writings these emblems are painted light-blue (*fig. 21, b, c*).

These circles and bands are evident in *fig. 21, a*, made from a drawing, by the writer, of one of three similar terracotta specimens in the *Museo Nacional*. These emblematic signs are in relief, and probably were originally painted blue.²⁷ At the feast Etzal-

with bands that come over the cheeks close under the chin, reminding one of the head-dress of the Jews at a certain period, or that of some Asiatic tribe." (OROZCO Y BERRA, vol. II, p. 359). It will be seen that Orozco y Berra, in this description, overlooks the mask. In Nebel's *Viaje* an illustration of a similar head is given in which, however, this noteworthy peculiarity is well defined by the artist. The writer is not aware that it has been noticed before.

²⁶ This inference will not seem strange to any one who has lived in Mexico, and knows to what an extent the manufacture of small dressed wax and clay figures is carried by the Indians. The figurines of Puebla, made of wax covered with cotton cloth, are justly celebrated, and are perfect miniature representations, full of life and movement, of the native vendors in their respective costumes, which vary according to their avocation. These little figures (the faces of which are usually about the size of the clay heads that form the subject of the present paper) are carefully and dexterously dressed with garments and ornaments made of the identical materials worn by the people themselves. At Puebla also are made, by Indians of the Aztec race, tiny and truly wonderful groups of fine clay figures, not half an inch in height. There is not a Mexican household that does not possess a collection of small images, more or less well made, and these may be seen to full advantage at Christmas-tide, when, passing through even the poorest quarters of a town, one perceives through open doors, and is often politely invited in to inspect, the *nacimiento*, or birth of Christ, represented in miniature. The skill of the Indian potters of Guadalajara is lauded throughout Mexico, and the writer has often been told of certain individuals there, who, after a few moments' observation only, can reproduce in clay, with extraordinary fidelity, not only the features of a stranger, but the whole figure with the details of the sometimes complex modern costume. These individuals claim, it appears, that their forefathers were all potters. Evidences that clay portraits were made by the ancient Mexicans, also, will be given in the second part of this paper.

²⁷ "At times one observes the hair arranged as a shingled roof, with an ornament encircling the top; the decoration about the eyes is most singular and would be compared in modern times to large spectacles: it can be nothing else but a distinctive mark of rank or race" (OROZCO Y BERRA, vol. II, p. 359).

qualiztli, in the sixth month, "many prisoners and slaves adorned with the ornaments of the gods 'Tlaloques' were killed in their honor." (Sahagun, book I, chap. VI; and book II, chap. XXV). A curious travesty was carried out on the same feast by the common people, who "took the cat's-tails or reeds with which the temple was decorated, and made from their leaves circles like rings or the frames of spectacles, and put these over their eyes, tying them behind with cords . . . with these over their eyes and a staff in their hand," etc. (Duran, vol. II, p. 283). These rings undoubtedly had some affinity or connection with the emblems of Tlaloc, and were worn in allusion to them. In the Vienna Codex (*fig. 21, b*) a woman, seated, is delineated with these unmistakably tied on.

III. D—Although the head-gear in each of these specimens is dif-



FIG. 21.—A, head in Museo Nacional; B, from Vienna Codex; C, from Bodleian MS.

ferent, they have in common the peculiarity of the two circles on the forehead. The six priests chosen to sacrifice victims "wore their hair much adorned and twisted, with strips of leather encircling the head.²⁸ On their foreheads they wore tiny targets (or shields) of paper painted of various colours." (Duran, vol. II, p. 95).²⁹ In the old English translation of Acosta (vol. II, p. 348) the following parallel passage occurs: "The other five had their hair much curled

²⁸ Examine closely III-D-1, on PL. III, where knotted bands are represented above the hollow circles on the forehead. This head also bears distinct traces of black paint. It is a well-known fact that the priests of certain grades besmeared themselves with black.

²⁹ Duran (vol. I, p. 388-390) mentions that the priests and the children destined to be sacrificed wear "large stars on their foreheads fastening their paper wreaths." See, also, Sahagun, book II, chap. XXIV, "the priests wore (at the feast Toxcatl) on their foreheads circular ornaments of paper plaited like the petals of roses."

and tied up with laces of leather bound about the midst of the head; upon their foreheads they carried small roundlets of paper painted with diverse colours." Attention is here drawn to the fact that the heart of the victim thus sacrificed was offered *to the Sun*, and that, on the brow of the Sun of the Stone Calendar, besides a central sign, two circles are sculptured in relief that will be found, upon comparison, to resemble those on clay head III-D-3. A peculiar arrangement of the hair is exhibited in III-D-2. The quality of the clay of which heads III-D-1 and 2 are made is coarse and unsifted, and they have the appearance of great age.³⁰

III. E.³¹—The dress and ornaments of the living image of the goddess Centeotl (Toçi) were these: "She had her mouth and chin, to the neck, dyed with *ulli*, a black gum; on her face she had what was like a round patch of the same. On her head she had a cap



FIG. 22.—From the *Codice Ramirez*.

made of cloth, twisted and tied; the ends of the knot fell over the shoulders, and tufts of feathers that were like flames were inserted in it. These fell towards the back of the head." (Sahagun, VIII, 7). The image of the goddess from the *Codice Ramirez* is shown in the illustration (fig. 22). The treatment of the turban-like "cap" in the drawing and in the clay heads is the same, and the analogy they bear in common to the description in the text will be manifest on a careful examination. Many

specimens exist with turbans or caps alone; it seems not unlikely that real feather decorations were fastened to these.

III. F.³²—"The priests . . . tied to the back of their heads flowers

³⁰ In connection with these unusual specimens, the following extract from Duran (vol. II, p. 275) is interesting: "These diviners" also deceived and persuaded parents into having faith and hope in the efficacy of the shaving of their children's hair by "saying that it was in this or that fashion that the ancient priests shaved themselves, thus they shaved the children's hair in the form of a crown, a circle or crosses—on some they left pellets (Spanish: *pegujones*) of hair at the back of the head, or in front, or at both sides." For further information proving the variety of manners in which the priests, according to their grade in the hierarchy, wore their hair, see ACOSTA, *Naturall and Morall Historie*, lib. 5; and DURAN, vol. II, pp. 91, 124.

³¹ Of this type there is one specimen in the *Museo Nacional* and three in the writer's collection.

³² It would seem as though this type had not come under Orozco y Berra's notice,

of plaited paper. These projected from each side of the head like semi-circles, as though they were ears of paper." (Sahagun, book II, chap. xxv). Attention is drawn to the series of lines visible in the semi-circular projections of III-F-4 and 5, that might be taken for an attempt at the representation of a plaited surface. Owing to the thinness of these projections, comparatively few complete specimens exist, but vestiges of their previous existence remain to show that they invariably accompanied the peculiar central prominence that characterizes this type.³³ The feast on which were worn the above symbolic ornaments (similar to those depicted on representations of Tlaloc and Chalchiuhtlycue) was that of Etzalqualiztli ("in honor of the gods of water, the Tlalocs"), and in the course of his description of the ceremonial usages of this same feast Sahagun speaks of the old priests called *quaquacuiltin*, who "were completely shaven with the exception of the crown of the head, where the hair was left long, in reverse of the clerical tonsure." There is no clue as to whether this patch of long hair fell behind, or was tied and brought forward, a fashion that the clay heads seem to display.³⁴ It will be noticed that this central relief is not treated in the same manner in all the specimens: in some it reaches farther over the face, is larger or smoother than others. In one of the nine specimens at the *Museo Nacional* and in III-F-4 a deep line extends along its centre, and the sides are roughly cut: some specimens show a series of scratched lines or depressions faintly marked. The row of heads of this group (PL. IV) will illustrate their great individual difference, and show that they do not represent a personified deity, but are probably portraits of individuals wearing a distinctive head-gear.

III. G.—This fine female head (*fig. 23, a*), found by M. Désiré Charnay at Teotihuacan,³⁵ and reproduced in his *Les anciennes villes*

unless he has them in view when he says, rather enigmatically (II, 360), "Another type shows the hair cut, between the temples, in a fashion well known in historical times, and in use at the present day by some races."

³³ Compare this with the somewhat similar central elevation of the feminine head dress in *fig. 18*.

³⁴ Sahagun (book IX, ch. xvii) describes a somewhat analogous mode: "the third slave . . . was arrayed as a man, with hair cut in the centre of the head like an elevation, called *quachichiquille* (feather-crest), and this elevation was not of hair, but of rich feathers."

³⁵ The writer has not seen this specimen, and only assumes that it has the characteristic finish of the back of the head and neck. The point upon which the stress

du Nouveau Monde, and in *Mexico à través de los Siglos*, displays two conventionalized forms of adornment: above is a row of four-petaled flowers of the same design as some sculptured in bas-relief on a fragment of stone also found at Teotihuacan, and those scattered over the upper garment, (*huipilli*) of the goddess Xochiquetzal as depicted in Duran's *Atlas* (fig. 23, b). Closer to the head is a line of finely executed wave pattern.³⁶

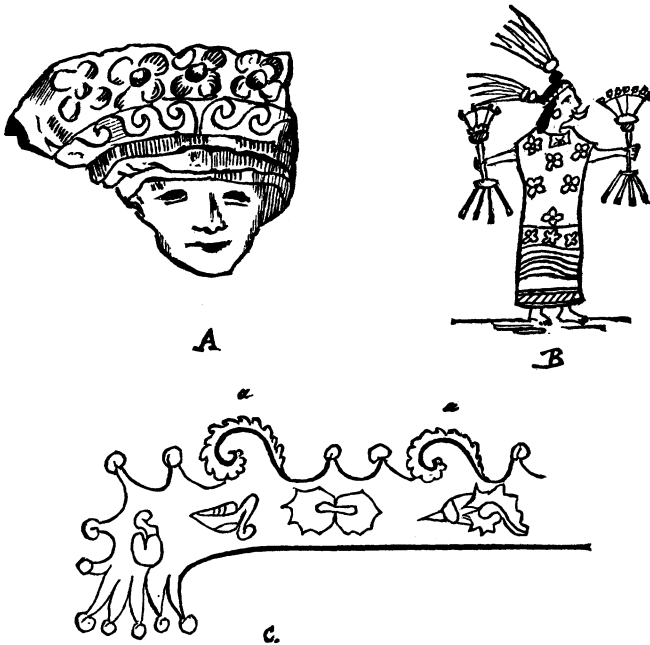


FIG. 23.—A, from *Mexico à través de los Siglos*, p. 243; B, from *Atlas Duran*; C, from *Vienna Codex*, p. 47.

III. H.—Leaving the head-dresses that seem connected with religious ideas or ceremonies, we come to the military insignia more

is laid in this case is, that the conventional designs represented in the head-dress were in use by the Aztecs.

³⁶ "The 'goddess of salt' had waves of water embroidered on her *huipilli*" (Sahagun, book II, ch. xxvi). By referring to (fig. 23, c) representations of waves in the Vienna Codex (Kingsborough, vol. II) we recognize in the curved outline of a portion of the water marked *a* the conventional pattern found on so many relics of aboriginal art. It is interesting to find this suggestion of its derivation, and, at all events, the explanation of what pattern was meant in the above passage.

seldom found on the terracotta heads. "They placed their heads in that of a tiger or serpent made of wood, with open jaws showing the fangs, so as to inspire the adversary with fear. All the noblemen and officers adorned their heads with beautiful plumes, adding, by this means, great height to their stature."³⁷ "To protect their heads, some wear what are like heads of serpents, tigers, lions and wolves with their fangs: the head of the man remains in the mouth of the animal as though it were devouring him: they are of wood, covered on top with feathers and ornaments of gold, precious stones, and are wonderful to behold."³⁸

The first specimen of the illustration (PL. IV. H) is, beyond question, the representation of a face in the jaws of a serpent. In the *Museo Nacional* are two with faces in the jaws of a lion. It would be difficult to assert anything so positive about the other (PL. IV. H²). It would seem, however, as if the helmet-shaped head-gear would have answered the purpose of "protecting the head," and might have been made of wood, ornamented with tufts of feathers.³⁹

III. 1.—The knights of the sun "were called *quachic*, which means 'shaven men' . . . and this was because to receive this grade of chivalry they shaved the entire head with a blade,⁴⁰ leaving over the right ear only a lock of hair as thick as a thumb—this lock was braided with red ribbon, and half the head was painted blue and the other half red or yellow." (Duran, vol. II, p. 163). It will be remembered that in Class II particular attention was drawn to a small, fine, conical-shaped head, that bears unusually well-preserved traces of red paint covering half the head only, and also marks above the place for the right ear, which was left with a smooth finish. PL. III. 2, from the Smithsonian collection, has a partly broken appendage of clay above the right ear. To the writer it seems probable that these heads are portraits of "*quachic*." The fact that the small

³⁷ Francisco J. Clavijero, *Historia Antigua de Mexico*, traducida por J. J. de Mora, Mexico, 1844, p. 215.

³⁸ Conquistador anonimo, ch. IV. *Coleccion de Documentos para la Historia de Mexico*, ed. Icazbalceta, Mexico, 1858.

³⁹ For numerous representations of military head-gear, see the *Codex Mendoza*, parts I and II (Lord Kingsborough's *Mexican Antiquities*, vol. I), whence fig. 25, g, is taken.

⁴⁰ There were barbers who cut hair and shaved heads . . . using, instead of steel blades, keen-edged obsidian flakes." (CARLOS MARIA DE BUSTAMANTE, *Texcoco en los ultimos tiempos de sus antiguos reyes*. Mexico, 1826, p. 236).

painted head was conically shaped, has suggested that it was thus intentionally formed, in a conventional manner, so as to convey the fact (important as showing military advancement) that the whole head was shaven, and that the lock, worn at the nape of the neck before the attainment of this higher grade, had been removed. Before applying this explanation to another singular and numerous group of heads of pyramidal form, a few interesting facts will be given, to show the importance attached to locks of hair worn on certain parts of the head.

The grades by which (military) dignities were reached were as



FIG. 24.—A, from *Mendoza Codex*, 86; B, from *Duran (Atlas, tr. 1, lam. 23)*; C, from *Vatican Codex*, 182; D, from *Mexico à travers de los Siglos*, p. 648.

follows: when a boy was small his head was cropped; at the age of ten a lock of hair⁴¹ was allowed to grow at the nape of the neck; at fifteen this was long, and the youth was called *cuexpatchicuepul*, because he had not yet distinguished himself in war; when he, alone or with others, took an enemy prisoner this lock was cut off, and this was a sign of honor.⁴² If the terracotta head III-I-2 be examined, it will be seen that cropped or clipped hair (as further on in

⁴¹ "This lock had no less than three names: *piochlli*, *quatzunlli*, *cuexpalli*" (MOLINA, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Mexicana*. Mexico, 1571).

⁴² Sahagun, book VIII, ch. xxxviii. See the whole of this passage.

female heads) is represented in a conventional way. From the apex there hangs, invariably, an appendage down the left side.⁴³ In one of the specimens from the Poinsett collection (III-I-4) this has finely-drawn lines on it; in other specimens it is generally smooth.⁴⁴ Figure 24, *b*, shows a striking resemblance to this head-dress, and in *fig.* 24, *c*, the head placed on the conventional representation of a mountain has the horizontal bands colored as hair, in the original drawing.⁴⁵ The writer suggests that these illustrations (*figs.* 24 and 25),⁴⁶ and the fact, mentioned by several authors, that "some warriors did not comb their hair but wore it matted and erect on their heads (see also *fig.* 25, *e, f*) so as to look terrible," probably explains the heads found by M. Charnay at Teotihuacan, and called by him "heads of negroes with woolly heads." The hair worn thus, standing erect from the forehead, may also account for the heads of Class II. D.

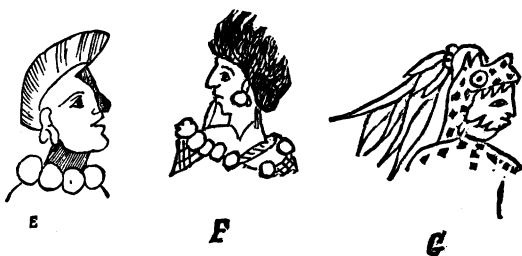


FIG. 25.—E, from *Mendoza Codex*, pt. II; F, from *Atlas Duran*; G, from *Mendoza Codex*.

⁴³ "Some wear their hair in a species of bands of pyramidal form, fastened up by a ribbon that hangs to the left. Those in which the fashion is more exaggerated come under the same category" (OROZCO Y BERRA, vol. II, p. 359).

⁴⁴ The writer imagines that, as the front only of the clay head was intended to be seen, the device of elongating the head was resorted to when it was necessary, for an important reason, to represent the back of the head with or without a distinctive badge. This supposition may be erroneous, however, and the reader may prefer to consider this type as having analogy to figures of captains. See SAHAGUN, book II, ch. XXVII; book VIII, ch. XXXVII; and DURAN, vol. II, p. 163. See also *fig.* 34, *Mappe Tlotzin II*: J. M. AUBIN, *Mémoires sur la Peinture didactique*. Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1885, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Of this type there are 9 specimens in the *Museo Nacional*.

⁴⁶ Notice a deep hole at the top of the head dress of PL. IV: III-I-1: it was made while the clay was moist, for, at the back, there is a visible displacement of material. In this specimen there is no sign of the usual clay appendage having been broken off, as in others. The inference is that, in this case, the ornament was supplementary and fastened in the cavity.

III. J.—“The noblewomen used to wear their hair hanging to the waist, or to the shoulders only. Others wore it long over the temples and ears only,⁴⁷ whilst the rest of the head was clipped (or cut in an irregular manner; see *tresquilado*, Spanish dictionaries). Others entwined their hair with black cotton-thread, and wore these twists about the head, forming two little horns above the forehead. “Others have longer hair and cut its ends equally, as an embellishment, so that, when it is twisted and tied up, it looked as though it were all of the same length; and other women have their whole heads shorn or clipped.” (Sahagun, book VIII, ch. XXII).

It will be seen that these various fashions are represented in the terracotta heads. A numerous type is the one where clipped hair is represented, in the conventional manner noticed above, on the top of the head, and two smooth-cornered prominences are left at each side over the temples (PL. IV: III-J-1). These were undoubtedly left



FIG. 26.—D, head in Museo Nacional (case v, No. 4); E, from Vienna Codex.

for the attachment of the locks of hair or ornamental appendages that we find well executed in clay in heads of the same shape,⁴⁸ and also encounter in the picture-writings (*figs. 26, d, e; 27, f, g, h*). The complete heads of this Class are the ones that have invariably been called by writers on the subject “Egyptian in type.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ In MOLINA, *Vocabulario de la Lengua Mexicana* (Mexico 1571), we find the words *atzotzocolli* and *ahamoxtli*, translated as “the long lock (of hair) left at the side of a girl’s head when this was shorn.” This proves the long and well established observance of the fashion.

⁴⁸ Some seem also shaved but wear three ornaments, one in the middle and one on each side of the forehead (see *fig. 18*) (OROZCO Y BERRA, vol. II, p. 359).

⁴⁹ “Some seem of an Egyptian type with a band above the forehead and two lateral wings: in these, round ears are well defined, as is the case in many of these images” . . . Several ornaments recall the Egyptian type so much that it is necessary to bear in mind that they are fragments of idols.” (OROZCO Y BERRA, vol. II, p. 539).

III. K.⁵⁰—There is one more well represented and defined feminine type (PL. IV) that merits attention, for in it are found admirably and artistically finished specimens. Its peculiarities are, a peak represented by sunken or raised lines coming over the forehead; and an erect, fan-shaped ornament of feathers radiating from the back of the head. Hair clipped in a similar shape is observable in III-K-2, which has traces of dull-red paint on the face. III-K-5 is one of the finest specimens that has come under the writer's notice. It is covered with well-preserved vestiges of white paint, and is the only one observed with this peculiarity. Other equally well executed heads are represented on plate IV. In some of these the head-dress is broken and incomplete, but the faces are evidently such admirable



FIG. 27.—F and H, from *Vienna Codex*; G, from *Borgian Codex*.

portraits, that to leave these fragments out of the series would be a real omission.

⁵⁰ The following passages show, not only that the priestesses had their hair cut in a distinctive manner, but that there were differences in this, according to their grade. "As soon as they (the maidens) entered (the temple where they were to serve) their heads were shorn." (FR. GERONIMO DE MENDIETA, *Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana*. Mexico, 1870, p. 106).—" . . the most aged nuns that were named *quaquacuiltin*, which means 'women who have their hair cut in a certain manner.'" (SAHAGUN, book VI, ch. XXXIX). Compare the way the aged priests, also named *quaquacuiltin*, had their heads shaved (SAHAGUN, book II, ch. XXV). Owing to the above indication given by Sahagun, the writer hesitates in accepting M. Rémi Siméon's rendering of the derivation of the name *quaquacuiltin* (see foot-note, p. 59, Sahagun, *Histoire Générale*, trad. Jourdanet et Siméon).

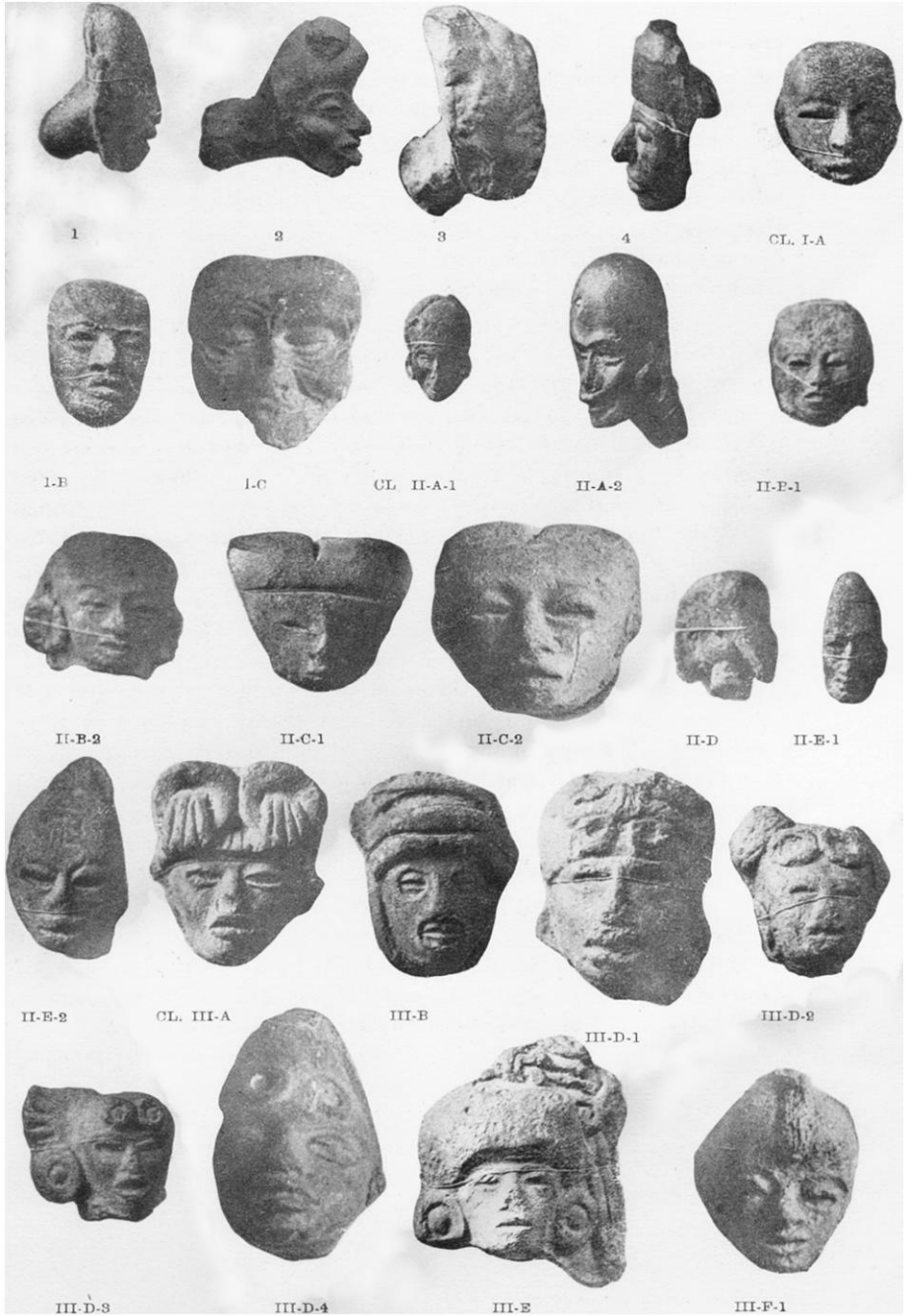
To sum up, in brief: the writer's conclusions, based upon the foregoing comparative study,⁵¹ are:—

1. That the terracotta heads in question, supplied with accessory decoration, were intended to be and were attached to bodies made of perishable materials, now disappeared. This explanation accounts satisfactorily for their present shape, and vindicates the intelligence of the skilful artists who shaped them. 2. That the heads are made of too many varieties of clay for it to be probable that they were all made in the same locality. 3. That they may be arranged in three large classes: whether belonging to different periods or merely exhibiting a greater or less skill in workmanship, is a point that can be ascertained, if at all, only by carefully conducted excavations at Teotihuacan. 4. That they are portraits of individuals (probably intended to be represented as dead) wearing in common a limited variety of head-gear. 5. That the reasons hitherto adduced by recent writers for assigning the clay heads of Teotihuacan to remote, strange and unknown civilizations cease to be tenable, as it has been shown, on the evidence of reliable writers and of the native pictorial representations, that closely similar or identical head-dresses were worn by the Aztecs at about the period of the Conquest.

ZELIA NUTTALL.

[*Conclusion in next number.*]

⁵¹ The writer has purposely confined these comparisons to the types noticed by Orozco y Berra and others, or represented, in the collections examined, by a number of specimens. Resemblances of single or even of two similar specimens to some of Sahagun's descriptions, have been omitted. Any information as to the number and kind of types represented in the numerous private collections that must exist, would be of value to the writer, who would thus be assisted in forming a comparative table that might be useful in future research. Readers are referred, for further descriptions of religious head-dresses actually worn, to SAHAGUN, *Historia General*, book I, chs. XI, XIII, XV, XVII, XIX; book II, chs. XXIV, XXXVII; book IX, chs. XV, XVII: DURAN, *Historia de las Indias*, vol. II, pp. 180, 187, 193, and 280. Until these and others have been studied, there will be no necessity to assign, with Orozco y Berra, to prehistoric races such relics as the clay heads in question, an account of their "strange and unknown attire."



TERRA-COTTA HEADS FROM TEOTIHUACAN.



TERRA-COTTA HEADS FROM TEOTIHUACAN.